

West Lafayette Fire Department July 2010

4th of July It was a safe 4th of July as the Fire Department had no calls for fireworks related injuries or fires. The community fireworks celebration in Tapawingo Park went well. Afterwards there was a carbon monoxide concern that, once known, was promptly mitigated.

Dancing in the Streets Weekend The weather started out nice enough on Saturday and didn't interfere with a neighborhood event in Lauren Lakes. Mike Roller, a Lauren Lakes resident, contacted us about possible fire department participation and we were able to have a truck and crew there for about an hour. We did, however, need to leave for a while to respond to a medical emergency.

As most citizens know, the weather drastically changed later in the day. Dancing in the Streets was cancelled and we had two firefighters, who were in Tapawingo Park to handle medical issues, get caught in the downpour and wind along with everyone else.

The severe weather was concentrated farther north in West Lafayette. The on duty crew responded to 17 calls that day. Our primary concerns were live power lines laying on the ground or ripped away from houses and the corresponding potential for house fires or injuries. In one instance nearly half of the wire in a basement burnt.

The citizen effort and cooperation throughout the weekend was commendable. I heard many stories and from a variety of sources of neighbors helping neighbors. Loaning equipment to one another, physically working side by side in each others yards and clearing streets are some of the community support stories and I'm sure there are several others that I haven't heard. On Monday I drove up and down streets in several neighborhoods to gain a more complete assessment of the damage. What I saw was around a hundred instances of damage that had already been attended to or cleaned up and less than a handful of instances of unattended to damage. This was impressive: In less than 48 hours almost all cleanup and repair was well underway. This example of community effort and togetherness is one that too many communities do not emulate.

Truck Repairs Engine 2, which is our oldest fire truck, needed to be taken out of service for three days and sent to a repair facility near Indianapolis. The parts that were replaced are not major ones however, accessing them required removal of several others. Our two newest trucks, Engines 1 and 3, continue to have on-going but intermittent electrical problems in certain circumstances. An August meeting has been arranged where electrical engineers from the manufacturer, Pierce, and technicians from the servicing dealer, Global Emergency Products, will be traveling to West Lafayette in a further attempt to definitively identify and correct the problem(s).

Chief Drew